

LABOUR MONTHLY

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Labour After Margate

★ R.P.D.

Automation and Socialism

★ Wal Hannington

The Struggle for Peace

★ Quæstor

★

*Unpublished Letters of
Frederick Engels*

November, 1955

One shilling and sixpence



FLASH- POINT



DOWN at Margate during the Labour Party Conference I had a number of interesting conversations with all sorts of people. An account of the stories, discussions, arguments and incidents which took place even outside the conference hall would more than fill an issue. I must pick out a mere handful. Sooner or later LABOUR MONTHLY was almost always mentioned—more often by others than by me. And that was natural; because there were few topics under discussion where L.M. had not already spotlighted the heart of the problem. For example, a Home Counties Labour Party official, commenting on our sub-title, *A Magazine of Labour Unity*, said: 'That's exactly it. The only thing that will save us is unity with everyone and every body working for Socialism. The tragedy of the Party was when it accepted these bans and proscriptions, dithered backwards and let those who never knew a day's struggle in their lives "re-think" every bit of socialism out of policy. They should have been at Bournemouth, and left us to get on towards Socialism with those going the same way.' (A keen Scottish Labour reader had already asked whether we could 'reprint Klugmann's article *Labour "Re-thinkers"* which it would be good to put in the hands of all delegates'.) There were many similar comments about 'false shepherds' who, as Milton said: '*for their bellies' sake Creep and intrude and climb into the fold*'; who '*shove away the worthy bidden guest; Blind*

mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold a sheephook'. Thus: '*The hungry sheep look up and are not fed*', as a delegate said in one debate, echoing the quotation in the October Notes. Among 'the hungry' was the local old age pensioner, concerned to increase pensions, saying: 'If they're Labour, let them *be Labour*'. There were the lobbying council tenant strikers to whose bitterness many delegates listened with sympathy, commenting: 'Of course we must fight it—and do a Lansbury if necessary'. That led to praise of Thomas Balmer's *Means Test in Housing*. For if the Tories today have not yet achieved their longed-for reserve army of unemployed, there is a tragic reserve army of homeless; and they would use both for the same purpose—disunity. There was the veteran Labour man, 82 years old, who told me how 'appalled' he was to find the lack of appeal to youth: 'We should be leading marches, like that one, everywhere', referring to the impressive Cut-the-Call-up parade. But everywhere Left-wing delegates turned they came up against what bedevilled all their efforts—the absence of a drive to follow up the Summit Talks with insistence on reversing the arms drive. On this I had an interesting comment from an experienced trade unionist: 'Ordinary folk are jumping at the chance to take the hand of friendship held out by the Soviet Union and other countries, whether it's visits here or delegations

(Continued on page iii of cover)

	Page
NOTES OF THE MONTH: Labour After Margate, by R.P.D.	481
AUTOMATION AND SOCIALISM, by Wal Hannington	498
THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE, by Quæstor	503
NOT CONTENT WITH A HANDFUL OF RICE, by Ivor Montagu	511
HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF, by C. C. J. Butlin	515
UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF FREDERICK ENGELS (IV)	521
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO	502
Illustrations to <i>Canterbury Tales</i> , by F. Konstantinov	504-505

Book Reviews :

J. V. Stalin, Works, Vol. XII: <i>James Klugmann</i>	524
Ragged Trousered Philanthropists, by R. Tressell: <i>Sir Richard Coppock</i>	525
The Common Secondary School, by Brian Simon: <i>S.G.</i>	526
Privileged Persons, by Douglas Goldring: <i>Stanley Evans</i>	527
The Arabs, by Edward Atiyah: <i>Nicholas Hannaford</i>	527

Notes of the Month

Labour After Margate

‘The great Labour Party has dedicated the first half of this century to striving to form a pattern of life which will ensure a certain material well-being, and in this we have succeeded.’

DR. EDITH SUMMERSKILL, Chairman’s Address to the Margate Labour Party Conference, October 10, 1955.

‘Mrs. M. Bredo (Barking) said that in Barking there were 80,000 people and 20 per cent. of them were old people, “and, believe me, the majority are starving”.’

Labour Party Conference proceedings, October 13, report in Manchester Guardian, October 14, 1955.

ON the heels of the Margate Labour Party Conference follows the thirty-eighth anniversary of the first victorious socialist revolution. The anniversary serves to remind us that socialism can be achieved by the organised working class movement. The first victory of socialism, and the first socialist state, was established over one-sixth of the world, when Mr. Gaitskell was 11 years old,

before there had been a Labour Government in Britain, and long before Mr. Gaitskell and his friends began their 'new' thinking to concoct an illusory alternative out of the most discredited pre-socialist recipes. When we speak of socialism, we mean socialism. Not an airy-fairy mystical ethical spiritual mirage of soulful aspirations and yearnings to cover the sordid realities of capitalist rent, interest and profits. But real socialism as understood by the pioneers: the taking over of the land, banks, industry and means of production out of the hands of the landlords and capitalists into social ownership, and the ending of unearned income from rent, interest and profits. This indispensable social change will also be achieved in Britain, once the working class finds the path to victory. It is overdue.

Proof of the Pudding

This thirty-eighth anniversary not only serves to remind us that socialism is possible of achievement, given the necessary conditions of policy, organisation and leadership of the working class at the head of the majority of the people. It also serves to remind the doubters that socialism is successful. On the basis of the victory of the socialist revolution, and the gigantic task of reconstruction made possible by that victory, the first socialist society in human history has been in existence now for close on two decades, since before the second world war. Only the strength of socialism made possible the victory over Nazism. The record of these years has demonstrated the superiority of the socialist economic system over the capitalist economic system. The socialist economic system has been proved by the test of experience to be the most successful economic system the world has known, alike in its capacity and rate of development, its freedom from crises and slumps, and its raising of standards of a gigantic population, both in the former metropolitan territory and in the former colonial territories, at a tempo never before touched.

Hard Facts

Between 1913 and 1954 the output of industry in the Socialist Soviet Union multiplied 35 times, and the national income at constant prices increased fourteen and a half times. Whereas in the United States between 1929 and 1954 the annual average increase of production was 3.7 per cent., in the Soviet Union during the same years (despite the colossal war destruction) the annual average increase was 15 per cent. In place of the former illiterate

Russia of Tsarism there were in 1954 no less than 1,706,000 full-time university students, or more than 20 times the number in Britain. The question is no longer whether socialism is necessary in Britain in order to solve Britain's problems and overcome the existing relative decline and retarded development. The only problem is how to win socialism. A comparable achievement is within our grasp in Britain, once the working class movement attains the necessary policy, organisation and leadership, with the heart, the brains and the guts to clear out the landlords and capitalists and take over. Margate showed that this stage has not yet been reached by the British working class movement, though the clamorous demand is growing.

Unresolved Crisis

Margate did not resolve the crisis of the Labour Party. On the contrary, it only gave expression to the crisis, alike of leadership, of policy and of organisation. In the face of the most critical international and home economic situation, in the face of the Tory Government's offensive on the standards of the people and the developing battle of millions of workers over wages and rents, in the face of the cold war champions' offensive to wreck Geneva on the eve of the Foreign Ministers' Conference, not a single significant decision of policy was made by Margate. Even the question of leadership was held over, for the decision of who is to occupy the pivotal position of the Leader of the Labour Party is not within the province of the Conference to determine. Margate certainly confessed the bankruptcy of existing policies by the decision to spend the next three years in evolving a policy. But the demand of wide sections of the rank and file for a socialist policy, voiced in nearly all the 53 resolutions on policy, was successfully circumvented by this device. Hence the only effective decision on policy was to make no decision on policy—*i.e.*, to leave a blank cheque for the Executive Committee—while the party goes to 'school' for the next three years to study the reports to be prepared by the experts of the Executive Committee on 'the individual and society' and 'equality' and other subjects.

Tory Jubilation

The inspiring slogan of Spellbinder Griffiths 'Let us get back to the classroom!' is scarcely a call to battle to the British people for the crucial three years ahead. No wonder that the Tory Government, aware of the stormy waters into which they are moving,

heaved a sigh of relief at the outcome of Margate. The judgment of Toryism on Margate was expressed in the editorial of the *Daily Telegraph* on October 15:

A comparison of the two party conferences must be heartening for Conservative supporters. Labour . . . cannot make up its mind. . . . The Government is assured of a clear run to the end of its term of office. The three years blank cheque for the Executive Committee was in effect a three years blank cheque for Toryism.

Converts to Socialism?

Undoubtedly the most positive feature of Margate was the emphatic demand of nearly all rank and file delegates who were able to get into the discussion, in the limited opportunities allowed them, for a socialist policy. This had the effect that by the second half of the conference every prominent right wing parliamentary leader found it necessary to lay his hand on his heart and proclaim his undying devotion to 'socialism'—of course in a spiritual sense—while actively combating every concrete proposal for a socialist policy. But the definitions of 'socialism' appended to these ardent confessions of faith in fact proclaimed the opposite. James Griffiths admitted that 'despite 1945-51 the ownership of property and wealth remained scarcely touched'—a not insignificant confession of bankruptcy of the supposed reformist path to socialism. He then proceeded to argue that the task must now be to strive to establish greater equality in the ownership of wealth, but not necessarily by public ownership, which should only be regarded as one means among many alternatives. It is obvious that the logic of this argument leads straight to the Tory conception—or mirage—of a 'property-owning democracy'. The arguments of Mr. Griffiths could be abundantly paralleled from the modern literature of the Tory Reform school, of which the financial magnate, Mr. Butler, has been the principal exponent. The heartfelt proclamation of 'socialism' conceals the kernel of Liberal-Toryism.

Socialism in Words and Capitalism in Deeds

Similarly Mr. Gaitskell's loudly applauded Declaration of Socialist Faith counterposed the spiritual ideal of socialism to the mere mechanical means of public ownership, and followed immediately after his affirmation that proposals for nationalisation had probably lost them votes in 1951 and 1955. Mr. Gaitskell wanted 'a society of equal men and women', not in the sense of their being 'equal in all respects' (have no fear, Lord Midas Moneybags), but in the

deeper religious sense, in the terms of the Sunday sermon to which he referred, of their being 'equal men' in the sight of God. He wanted equality of opportunity, 'everyone to have an opportunity of developing his personality', and 'fellowship' and 'fraternity' and 'democracy'. In short all the old slogans of liberal capitalism, or of modern Toryism, or, for the matter of that, of the Roman Catholic Church in parliamentary democratic countries. No wonder the cartoonists, who are far from being communist in their outlook, or such journals as the *Economist*, which is far from being unsympathetic to the City, have devised the image of 'Mr. Butskell' (the order of the two halves of the animal is important).

Down to Earth

Mr. Morrison was, after his fashion, more concrete and down to earth. After having cited, to stir the enthusiasm of any busmen hearers, the London Passenger Transport Board as his first essay in public ownership (although the London Passenger Transport Bill of the second Labour Government was in fact taken over and turned into law by the subsequent Conservative 'National' Government), and after having been reminded by Mr. Attlee to include the Bank of England in his list, he went on to make clear that no member of the Executive would dream of presenting to the electorate at the next election a proposal for 'the public ownership of all industry'.

I don't know one member of the Executive, past or present, who really believes in such a policy. We had a policy document some years ago in which there was a whole section devoted to privately owned industry, and it contemplated deliberately and consciously a mixed economy for at any rate a long time to come.

This policy was accepted by conference . . . but that does not mean that the Executive have turned their backs on public ownership. It means that we have to consider it on the merits of each case.

So, lest there should be any doubt about the outcome of the three years' search, or vain hopes aroused by the enticing prospect, the programme is firmly laid down by the Deputy Leader, Mr. Morrison, 'for a long time to come'. Not socialism, but the 'mixed economy', *i.e.*, the system approved by all the modern economists of capitalism and by the Conservative and Liberal Parties, who are also in favour of nationalisation in 'concrete cases', so long as there is no question of any general transference of industry to public ownership. Nationalisation is to come to the rescue of the lame ducks, the bankrupt industries of capitalism, in order to raise and enhance the general profit-making level of capitalism.

Re-educating the Rank and File

It would be a great mistake to imagine that the institution of the three year period of the search for a policy means that the right wing leadership has no policy. Not without justice Mr. Morrison indignantly denied this imputation. The three year moratorium is for the rank and file, to tie the hands of the conference, while the membership is put through the process of re-education. The right wing has a policy, even though it is so close to Toryism on every major controversial question that they have some difficulty in discovering any issue of differentiation to take up, and to that extent do require some research. But the right wing policy of approximation to Toryism is repugnant to the mass of the membership, and especially to the active rank and file, who still entertain the socialist hopes of earlier days. Hence the membership has to be sent 'back to the classroom', not in order to find the path to socialism, but in order to be cured of their naive socialist illusions, to be initiated into the sophistications of the 'new thinkers', and to accept the right wing policy, or, if not to accept it, at any rate to be sufficiently confused by an elaborate series of complicated documents as to discover the complexity of every question and the impossibility of the simple conception of the socialist transformation of society save as a very, very ultimate ideal.

Dilemma of the Right Wing

But in practice it is here that arises the dilemma of the right wing which reflects the chronic contradiction at the heart of the Labour Party. The Labour Party was founded on the basis of the class organisations of the working class in order to reflect the class interests of the working class, as then conceived, against the ruling parties of capitalism and the two-party system of capitalism. It has evolved, in the practical outcome of half a century, and through three Labour Governments, into one of the two ruling parties of capitalism, the successor and replacement of the old Liberal Party in the two-party system of capitalism, playing with the Conservative Party the old game of the Ins and the Outs in the administration of capitalism and imperialism. To the new generation of leaders, trained in the economics of modern monopoly capitalism, this function is common sense. But the vestiges of the origins still impede this function. The class basis, which these leaders are at pains to deny, still remains the indispensable basis of organisation and finance. And in the sphere of policy the same vestigial relic

is expressed in the nominal aim of socialism, whose fulfilment the active rank and file still demand, but which these leaders know to be entirely incompatible with the practical politics of the two-party system of capitalism.

Spectre of Socialism

Like Banquo's ghost, the spectre of socialism still haunts the right wing leaders. 'Thou canst not say I killed thee.' The programme of a liberal reform party, sharing with Conservatism the administration of the modern capitalist state, is at best a programme of piecemeal reforms. In practice, in the period of imperialist decline, it becomes a programme of colonial wars, colossal armaments, heavy burdens on the workers and deep antagonism to the real socialist world that is arising. Such a programme excludes socialism, save in the old official sense of the declaration of Edward VII as Prince of Wales in 1895 that 'we are all socialists nowadays'. The leaders of today, who in their practice know and understand this actual situation very well, are in their professions still compelled to proclaim their undying devotion to the aim of socialism, and then find themselves embarrassed by the insistent demand of their followers for the fulfilment of their supposed aim.

Socialism and Communism

Once it was easy, in the days of MacDonald, to contrast the peaceful, constitutional reformist path to socialism with the horrors of violent revolution which communism was declared to represent. But that was before there was a Labour majority in parliament. Now there have been two Labour Governments with a parliamentary majority, over a period of six years, and at the end, according to Mr. Griffiths, 'the ownership of wealth and property remained scarcely touched'. There is expectation some day of another Labour majority, at any rate by the swing of the pendulum, and Mr. Morrison has made clear in advance that there will be no question of 'the public ownership of all industry' being put into operation by such a Labour majority or by any Labour majority 'for a long time to come'. The choice is no longer between 'peaceful parliamentary' and 'violent revolutionary' paths to socialism, as MacDonald loved to picture it. The choice is between socialism and no socialism. A stage has been reached when the merciless logic of facts is beginning to teach the truth that the Communist Party is the only political party in Britain which fights for socialism, and that the exclusion

of communists from the Labour Party (including thereby the disfranchisement of affiliated trade unions from the rights of democratic choice of their representatives) is only the counterpart of the exclusion of socialism in practice.

Nightmare of 'Totalitarianism'

The leaders of today have learned that socialism, taken seriously, in the modern world means communism. Socialism, that is to say, in the sense of the expropriation of the capitalists and landlords, the destruction of the very basis of Toryism, the concentration of all political power in the hands of the workers, the extinction of free enterprise, with everyone becoming employed in the great nationalised industries of a socialist state—everything, in fact, that the pioneers used to describe—why, that is the very picture of what they denounce as 'totalitarianism'. That is the supreme enemy against which they, in common with the Conservative and Liberal leaders, are ranged. But it is here that arises the contradiction in their position which they struggle to resolve. For the Labour Party in its earlier days adopted, after the victory of the first socialist revolution in Russia, the aim of socialism in its then new 1918 Constitution. The formal aim of socialism, with the dread phrase 'common ownership of the means of production', still remains enshrined in the Constitution of the Labour Party. The shibboleth survives after the practice has changed.

'New Thinking'

The so-called 'new thinking' of the Labour Party right wing theorists represents their genuine attempt to overcome this anomaly. The 'new thinking' is not about the path to the known and recognised goal, that is, how, in the modern world situation, in the political conditions of Britain, to achieve socialism. The 'new thinking' is about the goal itself, *i.e.*, to revise the goal of socialism. But the majority dare not yet say this aloud. Only a few bold spirits have so far dared to face the conclusions of their own logic and propose the excision of the sacred phrase from the Constitution. The nearest approach to a direct expression of this desire to change the fundamental aim was made by Mr. Gaitskell, the favoured future leader from the standpoint of many of the right wing, at the Socialist Commentary meeting at Margate on October 11:

There are people who speak nowadays as though anybody who analyses or questions what are said to be the fundamental aims of our movement is in some way or other betraying the cause.

I find it extraordinary that in our party some people should all the time be suspicious of any attempt to analyse what the word Socialism means, because the last thing you could accuse the pioneers of was refusing to think. They spent their lives breaking away from another system of thought. If we ever get to the stage when we ban thought about our fundamental faiths there must be something wrong with those faiths.

The implications of this are unmistakable. It is 'the fundamental aims of our movement' which he wishes to 'question'. He wants to 'break away from another system of thought' in the same way as the pioneers broke away from capitalism to socialism. He wants to raise the issue, not of the path to the goal agreed in the Constitution, but of 'our fundamental faiths'. But if it were suggested that Mr. Gaitskell is really trying, in perfect accord with the practice of the Labour Party, to adapt its theory to its practice, and to replace the aim of socialism by liberal capitalism, he would be deeply offended.

The Great Contradiction

It is from this situation that arises the essential contradiction in the present stage of the Labour Party, which underlies its crisis. The right wing leaders find themselves still compelled to profess socialism in principle, even while they repudiate it in practice. Hence their ceaseless efforts to explain it away, to transform it into a spiritual ethical aspiration with as much relation to the real world of practice as the Sermon on the Mount. But this task is not so easy of accomplishment. For their followers, and especially their more ardent followers, who constitute their indispensable electoral campaigning force, expect them to fulfil socialism in practice. The hard facts of the real world of class society, of rent, interest and profits, break in on all the would-be spiritual dreamings. The demand for the fulfilment of socialism arises from the active rank and file. From this follows the perennial crisis in the Labour Party, which has its counterpart in the contradiction between the actual class basis of the party in its organisation and the denial of that class basis by its leadership and policy.

Frustration of the Left

On the other hand, the left wing within the Labour Party, the rank and file left sincerely desiring socialism, find themselves ceaselessly frustrated, as they beat against the barriers of the existing framework, organisation, dominant policy and leadership of the Labour Party. They seek to promote their aim by presenting scores

of resolutions for a socialist policy at the Annual Conference. They discover that the remorseless working of the machine and the manipulation of the agenda soon make mincemeat of their resolutions. In the Trades Union Congress, with a wider democratic representation (despite some still not inconsiderable limitations on democracy) of all sections of the organised industrial working class, there is able to take place a genuine battle of the left and the right in the working class movement, with a steady advance of the left during the current period, great debates on policy, prominent spokesmen marshalling the case on either side, and a consistent vote of three to three and a half millions for the militant left against four and a half millions for the General Council. In the Labour Party no such democracy applies. The majority of the most prominent leaders and spokesmen of the three and a half millions on the left in the organised working class are excluded. The real forces of the left are thereby divided. The left delegates who get through have had to operate under continual fear of the witch-hunt and the gag, if they are suspected of favouring co-operation of the left. Under these conditions the puny leaders on the platform, wrapped in thick layers of protective cottonwool of undemocratic practices, are able to score their too easy mechanical victories. Last month we wrote in anticipation of Margate:

The voice of the left, despite the vehement protests and interventions which may be expected from many sincerely socialist local delegates, will at the best be muffled, distorted and confused.

Margate has proved the truth of this. The contrast between Southport and Margate illustrates the significance of the presence or absence of the Communist Party in the battle of the left and the right in the organised working class movement.

Confusion on the Left

This question is wider than a question of representation and democratic rights. It is a question of politics. The weakness of the left at Margate was not only the weakness of a disorganised army of disparate elements facing a highly organised right wing machine. It was a political weakness of the absence of common leadership and programme. The protest that was expressed was essentially a protest on behalf of the simple aim of socialism, to return to the ideals of the pioneers. Thus the forward looking movement bore the appearance of looking backwards, while the really reactionary Executive leadership assumed the role of facing the modern facts

of today. There was no consistent common platform of the left, plainly presented, not merely in the general demand for socialism, but on the great issues of the day, the response to Geneva and the battle to end the cold war, the wage battle of the workers, the answer to the Butler economic offensive, the necessity of a programme of action to mobilise the people in the fight against Toryism and capitalism. Those elements among the top leadership who were regarded as dissident elements played at the conference, as in the whole period since the election, a highly intermittent and erratic role. Mr. Bevan might win an ovation with a dramatic outburst in the secret session. But in the crucial debate on policy he took no part. Even his most ardent disciples would be hard put to it to define his political platform on the great issues of the day. The left at Margate was an army of emotion without leadership and without a platform. All this indicates the need, after the right wing victory at Margate, for deeper self-examination by the left on the whole problem of the Labour Party and the path forward for the advance to socialism.

Whence and Whither?

It was with this need in mind, as a background to the wider questions of the Labour Party, that we suggested last month the usefulness of studying the recent much publicised book which came out in the beginning of this year on *British Political Parties* by R. T. McKenzie. Not that the author is to be regarded as a fount of political wisdom. His outlook is 'orthodox' in the fullest sense of the traditional capitalist constitutional mechanism and right wing labour politics. In the *Observer* pre-Margate series of articles on the Labour Party he threw out the suggestion that, to complete the evolution of the Labour Party, the obsolete clause in the Constitution on 'the common ownership of the means of production' should now be dropped. He approves the evolution of the Labour Party from the original conception of a working class party, built and controlled from below, and sending representatives to parliament as its servants in order to break the two-party domination of capitalism, into becoming itself one of the pillars of the two-party system of capitalism, alongside the Conservative Party, and, like the Conservative Party, essentially ruled from above, with the mass membership and Annual Conference as an auxiliary electoral and propaganda machinery. He recognises that the original conception would have meant a breach in capitalist institutions by establishing the sovereignty of an extra-parliamentary body, the Annual Confer-

ence of the Labour Party and its Executive, controlling its representatives in parliament, and therefore, in the event of a majority, controlling the Government. This menace to capitalism was averted. The parliamentary boa constrictor, as Winston Churchill once observed, successfully absorbed and digested the Labour Party. How this change took place, McKenzie traces in detail. Many Labour Party members might wish to question his analysis. No socialist would accept his conclusion. But his careful documented survey, which ought to have been made long ago by a Marxist historian, contains rich material, even though it points to a different conclusion.

Who Controls the Labour Party?

To establish his thesis the author examines in turn the structure and functioning of the Conservative and Labour Parties, in order to bring out the essential similarity, despite the differences in original character and in some of the outward forms. In the Conservative Party the subordination of the mass membership and conference to the leadership is open. But where is the seat of power in the Labour Party? Of course the Annual Conference is sovereign, the average Labour Party member, accustomed to working class organisation, will reply. The Labour Party Conference, affirmed Mr. Attlee in his *The Labour Party in Perspective*, published in 1937,

lays down the policy of the Party and *issues instructions which must be carried out* by the Executive, the affiliated organisations, and its representatives in parliament and on local authorities (*italics added*).

Fine. What could be clearer? Unfortunately for this textbook wisdom, at the Annual Conference in the very same year in which this appeared, in 1937, when a resolution was submitted calling on the Parliamentary Labour Party to vote against the arms estimates of the National Government, the Executive spokesman declared that 'the Executive cannot accept the resolution' on the grounds that 'it contains an instruction to the Parliamentary Party' and that this would be 'contrary to the constitutional procedure not only of Parliament but of the Party itself'. The 'autonomy' of the Parliamentary Party was established at an early stage. The author accumulates innumerable instances to prove the ignoring or overriding of Conference decisions by the leadership. Certainly the leadership will take account of moods and currents revealed by the Conference, just as the Conservative leadership may do of the Conservative Conference (the 300,000 housing target), without being

bound by them. But the real position was summed up with his customary acerbity by Philip Snowden in his *Autobiography* :

My experience of Conferences has taught me to attach very little importance to their resolutions. . . . Conferences will talk; let them talk. Governments, including Labour Governments, dispose of Conference resolutions. . . . The rank and file of the Labour Party ought to have learned that lesson by now. They have had enough experience of the futility of Conference resolutions.

What of the Executive?

Perhaps the Executive Committee represents the seat of power? That was the illusion which the unhappy Harold Laski entertained, when as Chairman of the Executive Committee he imagined that he could offer advice to Mr. Attlee and was promptly snubbed for his pains ('a period of silence on your part would be welcome'). The Executive may have summary and terrible powers to deal with the unfortunate rank and file member or dissident left. The tune changes when it is a question of dealing with the dominant leadership, constituted as a Government, or even with the autonomous Parliamentary Party. The Labour Party *Handbook* for 1951 firmly lays down:

The National Executive Committee has no authority over the actions in Parliament of Labour Ministers or Labour Members.

The official party publication *The British Labour Party* in 1950 ('prepared for the guidance of foreign visitors desiring to know more about the structure of our movement'), after explaining the arrangements for 'liaison' between the Executive and the Labour Government, added:

In this way, at least, Parliament and Government are *not unaware*, of the decisions and deliberations of the Party's governing body.

Tremble and obey? Not on your life. 'Not unaware' conveys the correct tone of majestic condescension, just as the decisions of the Conservative Conference are 'communicated' to the Leader. Farewell the dreams of the sovereign Executive.

Parliamentary Robots

Since the National Labour Party Conference and Executive are thus but the outward trappings, without powers of control save in respect of the electoral-campaigning machine, perhaps the real seat of power resides in the 'autonomous' Parliamentary Labour Party. Not so fast. On the eve of the first Labour Government, in 1923, the new office was instituted of 'Leader of the Parliamentary Labour

Party' (parallel to the Conservative Party, and, as with them elected by the M.P.s). Four Labour Governments have since been formed. In each case the Leader appointed his Ministers without control by the parliamentary party. Thereafter loyalty to the Ministry became the test of discipline. A liaison committee would be set up, but with purely advisory functions. Once again the author cites case after case of decisions of the majority of the parliamentary party reversed by the leadership in office.

Socialist Leaders Minus Socialism

Thus in every case we come back to the Leader and the small leading group around him, as the real seat of authority, in accordance with the parliamentary tradition, the effective controllers and dictators of policy, with very powerful machinery to impose this policy on the movement, but with no normal constitutional machinery for the membership to control them. All depends on the Leader and the tiny leading group around him—as the collapse of 1931 revealed, as soon as the three top leaders deserted. The cause of socialism is placed in the hands of these top leaders, with the obedient and trustful loyalty of the rank and file. And then the truth begins to percolate through that these leaders have long lost any practical belief in socialism. To avoid any unkind present references, let us take the classic case of MacDonald, loyalty to whom was made the test of loyalty to the Labour Party for so many years. Every Labour Party member knows that MacDonald, Leader of the Labour Party, deserted to the Tories in 1931. But fewer know that as far back as 1912 the observant Mrs. Webb was already recording in her diary that he was 'sceptical of all the reforms he is supposed to believe in', and two years later that 'he honestly disapproves of nearly all the planks in the ostensible party programme'. And by 1924 the all too shrewd Churchill was observing of the Labour Party that 'the leaders don't believe the doctrines with which they gull the crowd'. There is no doubt of the oceans of working class loyalty and sacrifice that have been poured out without stint over decades to build up these leaders in the hope of socialism. But loyalty and trust are not enough in the hard world of politics. It is necessary to learn the lessons and build more strongly if the working class is to win victory over capitalism and accomplish the formidable voyage to socialism. This lesson the militant socialists of 1920 had already learned when they built the Communist Party.

The Block Vote

The weakness of Mr. McKenzie's book is that he sees the Labour Party without the working class and without the class struggle. He sees the Labour Party from the lofty parliamentary standpoint and the rarefied atmosphere of official documents, conference records and prominent personalities' memoirs. But he does not see the contradiction at its base, arising from its being built on the mass organisations of the industrial working class struggles, which constitute the foundation of the Labour Party and thus fundamentally differentiate it from the Conservative Party or the old Liberal Party, despite the similarities of top leadership and policy. He sees the block vote of the trade unions as only the mechanical instrument for maintaining and perpetuating the rule of the right wing top leadership against the impotent revolts of the struggling constituency parties.

The parliamentary leaders have little to fear from the party conference as long as they retain the confidence (and the block vote support) of the traditionally moderate and conservative leadership of the majority of the big trade unions.

In support of this he quotes Sidney Webb's view, recorded by Mrs. Webb in 1930:

Sidney observed that the constituency parties were frequently unrepresentative groups of nonentities dominated by fanatics and cranks, and that *if* the block vote of the Trade Unions were eliminated it would be impracticable to continue to vest the control of policy in Labour Party Conferences.

It is true that Arthur Henderson in the reorganisation of 1918 contemplated rebuilding the party solely on the basis of individual membership, and even declared that 'if he had to begin afresh that would be the ideal at which he would aim'. But the impracticability of such a proposition from the standpoint of successfully maintaining their domination soon became evident to the right wing leadership. In the 'bond' between 'the parliamentary and trade union leadership of the Labour movement' McKenzie finds the 'essential key to the understanding of the functioning of the Labour Party'.

No Solid Rock

If this analysis were the last word, it would coincide with the despairing outlook of those left elements in the constituency parties who see the block vote and the trade unions as the impregnable

enemy and beat their heads vainly against a brick wall. But Mr. McKenzie, confident in his belief in the basic conservatism of British institutions, does not contemplate the possibility that the advance of militant trends within the trade unions may transform this situation. We have already seen that successive Trades Union Congresses have increasingly revealed this developing shift in the balance of forces within trade unionism. We have already witnessed the curious spectacle on the eve of Southport when Messrs. Morrison, Gaitskell and Phillips had to present themselves as suppliants to four Communist General Secretaries of leading unions—whom in their public utterances they would profess to regard as ‘infiltrators’ and ‘enemy agents’ and ‘disruptors’—to beg them in loyalty to the common cause for more money for the Labour Party (while denying them rights in the Labour Party). Supposing this type of situation were to develop further? Supposing the progressive alliance of communist and non-communist trade unionists were to advance to manifest strength of support in an increasing number of unions? What then, Mr. McKenzie? What then, Messrs. Morrison, Gaitskell and Phillips? The world moves in spite of all. The fight goes forward.

The Communist Party and the Working Class

The outlines of the future development of the labour movement, including in relation to the future of the Labour Party, will only be determined in the battle. The right wing leadership have still plenty of cards up their sleeve and will not shrink from attempting further disruption to maintain their hold. The struggle for the militant advance of the British working class is no short-term struggle. But unlike those despairing left elements in the constituency parties who have fallen into the trap of seeing the battle as a battle between the constituency parties and the unions, the Communist Party has understood that the militant advance of the British working class must be rooted in the mass organisations of the industrial working class. The whole history of the British labour movement has proved this. But the whole history of the British labour movement has also proved the indispensable role of a political working class party of the fight for socialism in order to battle down the forces of conservatism and win the way forward for this militant advance of the mass organisations. Not the disruption of the left, not the counterposing of one section against another to the advantage only of the right wing leadership, but the united battle of the left in the constituency labour parties, of the Communist

Party and of the progressive forces of trade unionism—this is the path to victory of the left in the labour movement in order to transform the face of British politics.

Next Steps for the Left

The lessons of Margate need to be taken to heart by the left. The indispensable next steps are clear. First, the necessity of a united political programme of the left, embracing not only the aim of socialism, but a positive response and leadership on the current great issues of the mass struggle, for peace against the champions of the cold war, for colonial liberation, against the Butler economic offensive and for solidarity in the fight on wages, hours and rents, alongside the fight against the Tory Government and for a new Government with a programme closer to the interests of the working people. Secondly, the necessity for extending co-operation of all sections of the left, communist and non-communist, political and industrial, on the basis of common action for these common aims. Third, the necessity for a determined fight against the system of bans and disruption in the labour movement, and for equal democratic rights of all sections. Fourth, the necessity for developing the strength of the Communist Party, and of the only daily working class newspaper, the *Daily Worker*, as the indispensable instrument of the fight for socialism and for the unity of the left in the labour movement, in order to carry forward the advance to the aim of a united labour movement capable of leading the struggle of the people against Toryism and capitalism and to the future victory of socialism. These are some of the lessons of Margate.

October 17, 1955.

R.P.D.

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AUTOMATION AND SOCIALISM

WAL HANNINGTON

A NEW term, 'Automation', has entered our industrial vocabulary and is the subject of much discussion in the factories and the trade unions. In a few words it can be described as 'a form of mechanical and electronic production—minus human labour'.

The Trades Union Congress last September discussed the subject. It passed a resolution recognising that Britain stands at the threshold of great technological advances and welcoming the General Council's initiative in beginning discussions on the trade union problems arising. But no clear lead was given by the General Council and the resolution which was passed suggested that the solution lay in workers playing a greater part in industry through joint consultation. Such a proposal implies, first, that the employers are prepared to accept the principle of consultation with their workers about the introduction of automation plant into their factories, and secondly, that a permanent solution of the problem is possible in the interests of the workers within our present economic system of society.

It would indeed be a complete change of attitude on the part of the employer if he accepts the principle of consultation with his workers about the introduction of labour-saving machinery, let alone automation plant. The employer has always claimed that such a development is a 'managerial function' and has always insisted that it is his sole prerogative. Even in the nationalised industries the unions are not consulted on technical developments. The most that happens in this respect is that they are notified after the decisions are made. Therefore even to establish the right of prior consultation means that the trade unions must be prepared to challenge the established rights and privileges of the employing class.

Most of the articles which have been written about automation have dealt with the technical aspects of the subject, namely, how the link-up takes place in the machining operations by the use of automatic transfer machines; how the tools are maintained on the transfer line; how safety devices are embodied in the machine so that in the event of tool breakage or any other mechanical failure the line of machines automatically stops and signals are given to indicate where the fault is; how by the use of electronics and sensitive micro-switches the operation at one part of the machine can

be synchronised with the movement of other parts, in short, how the whole mechanical operation for the completion of a job can be carried through without the aid of human labour.

But there is something more to consider about automation, namely, the fundamental effects arising from it which confront the working class.

Some writers refer to automation as a new invention or, a new discovery. This is not correct. Automation is a new term but it is not a new invention. It is the logical development within the machine age towards the perfection of mechanisation. It has been operating on a minor scale for many years in the engineering industry in the production of certain small components. Automatic machines are a well-known part of the equipment of modern machine shops in engineering. The large motor-car manufacturers have already applied automation in an almost perfect form to all the operations involved in the machining of cylinder blocks. Automation is also in operation in certain other industries such as oil refineries, flour milling, rayon production, food processing, and paper making. But this has only been a beginning. The problem now before us is not that of a new invention, but the large-scale extension of automation throughout the whole of industry.

When the machine age superseded the system of handicraft production at the beginning of the 19th century, it caused terrible suffering amongst the handicraft workers by throwing them out of employment. It led to the rise of a movement amongst the workers which desperately sought to arrest the development of the machine age by smashing the machines. That was known as the Luddite Movement. The utmost punitive and oppressive measures were used by the ruling class to crush the movement but it continued for several years. It is easy to talk of that movement as being a foolish and ill-considered attempt to put the economic clock back; but let us not forget that trade unionism, then in its early stage, was itself outlawed by the Combination Acts, and also that the working class were denied any political rights. To the mass of starving workers violence on their part appeared to be the only remedy. Today individual acts of violence are obviated by the existence of a powerful trade union and political movement which can, if properly led, be exercised in the defence of the workers.

Today, faced with the possibility of a great development in Automation to cover the main branches of industry we must realise that great hardship can again be created amongst the workers by wide-

spread displacement of labour, unless there is a fundamental change in the character of our industrial system in such a way that the effects of automation are brought within the control of the trade union and political working-class movement.

Our present machine age became possible as a result of the invention of motive power for the machines, first in the form of the steam engine—invented by James Watt in 1763 and adapted to industrial requirements, thereby replacing the watermill; then the gas engine, invented by Lenoir in 1860, and later the electric motor. The distinguishing feature of Automation is that whereas the machines of the industrial era required manipulation by human labour, Automation now eliminates the human labour in the operation of the machines and replaces it by mechanical or electronic control.

Some trade union leaders are saying that Automation has no dangers because, in the main, the labour displaced will be absorbed in the manufacture of the equipment necessary to Automation. This not only overlooks the technical point that Automation equipment in large measure can itself be produced by Automation; but also those who make such statements reveal a lack of understanding of the ethics and economic laws governing capitalist society.

Fundamentally, all mechanical developments introduced by employers have as their object the reduction in the costs of human labour power—either by replacing some workers by the use of machines, or by using the same number of workers to produce in quantity with machines, what would otherwise require a much larger number of workers to produce. The spur of mechanisation under capitalism is not the welfare of the worker, but the profit of the employer.

The expenditure by the employer on capital development, *i.e.*, machines, buildings, equipment, comes out of the increased exploitation of the worker. The capitalist does not introduce labour-saving machinery to create an equal demand for labour in his establishment for an equal quantity of production! In return for capital expenditure he expects a higher level of production with higher profits—if he does not think he will get that he does not make that capital expenditure.

Unless the standard of living of the people rises proportionately to the increase in productivity, then at some stage in the development the system plunges into economic crisis which reflects itself in mass unemployment and poverty for millions of workers. Has

that not been the historical feature of capitalism for over 150 years—a cycle of trade booms and slumps? Therefore, if Automation displaces labour on a mass scale without a corresponding reduction in the working week to absorb the surplus human labour, with also a rise in the standard of living of the people commensurate with the increase in production which flows from Automation, we shall be bound to see widespread suffering amongst the people similar to that which followed the beginning of the industrial system.

The employing class will no more offer shorter hours and higher living standards for the workers in the future than they do today. That would be contrary to the very nature of capitalism. Those conditions can only be obtained through the struggle of the workers, but although we may succeed in defeating the worst effects of the system, we can never be secure in our achievements until we have ended the system of capitalism and replaced it with the system of Socialism.

The struggle for Socialism becomes all the more urgent by the great advance which has been made in the field of science by the development of atomic power. Atomic Power and Automation are co-related. Atomic Power can either become the new motive power in industrial development, or it can be the instrument of death to mankind. Atomic Power now threatens the existence of mankind because, taking the world as a whole, social and political development has not kept pace with scientific development. Atomic Power and Automation belong to the era of Socialism, where they could only be used to the great benefit of mankind.

In the control of capitalism they become a deadly menace to the people, because at any moment the political and military maniacs of capitalist society, in their desperate struggle to stop the onward march of the people, can release the forces of world destruction. Karl Marx in his statement of the *Materialist Conception of History* explained that the method prevailing in any Society of producing the material livelihood determines the Social, Political, and Intellectual life of men in general. We can see this in the changing character of human society throughout the ages from primitive tribal society, then slavery (as typified in the Roman and Grecian empires), feudalism, and now the system of capitalism. Throughout the ages the ruling class has had power to inflict terrible hardships upon the workers. They have done so. They have also had the power to destroy large numbers of workers, and they have done so—either by the rapaciousness and injustice of their systems—or by wars. But

they have never before had the power to destroy the whole people! They possess that power today because the people have not advanced fast enough politically to take it out of their hands. Where that political advance has been made, such as in the Socialist sector of the world, Automation and Atomic Power in the control of that system is there to be developed for the expansion of life—not its destruction.

Therefore, whilst the trade unions must continue to fight on the everyday grievances of the workers, we must intensify our efforts to awaken a new consciousness about the need to end capitalism and build a Socialist world in its place. We must show that the development of Automation and Atomic Energy belongs to the age of Socialism. They have been spawned in the cesspool of capitalism but they can only be nurtured for the benefit of mankind in the cradle of Socialism. Therefore we must campaign as never before to win the workers to Socialism. Socialism cannot be regarded simply as an aspiration or an ideal for which progressive-minded people strive. We must make it clearly understood by the whole working class that Socialism is a vital necessity for the survival of the human race.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

CHINA

In various provinces in different parts of China there exist at the present time over 200 Soviet districts, the population of which exceeds 30,000,000, and many times this number are directly under the influence of the Soviets. In the Soviet regions, all counter-revolutionary elements have been eliminated, while the masses have taken possession of the factories, the land, warehouses, and stocks of provisions. In order to consolidate and extend the Soviet rule of the masses of workers and peasants in the whole country and to lead the struggle against the anti-Soviet forces, the All-Chinese Congress of Soviet Districts, which was held in May of this year, decided to convene a general Soviet Congress on November 7, the anniversary of the November Revolution. . . . There is no doubt that this Soviet Congress will be successfully called together on December 11 and that it will formally set up a provisional Chinese Soviet Government which will enormously enhance the power of the working masses in the whole of China to fight for Soviet rule throughout China, the ending of Kuomintang domination and the achievement of the final victory over imperialism and capitalism.

From The World of Labour: Preparations for All-Chinese Soviet Congress, November, 1930.

THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

1917 - 1955

QUÆSTOR

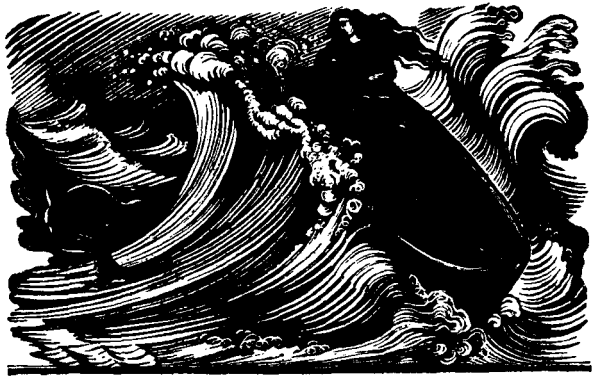
ON November 8, thirty-eight years ago, Lenin was winding up a debate in the Second Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies on the Decree proposing to all the warring peoples and their Governments that immediate negotiations should begin for a just and democratic peace. It was one day after the Petrograd workers, by their successful insurrection under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, had established a government in Russia which was pledged to the cause of Socialism. But it was also in the midst of the first world war: Russia was in a state of economic crisis, she had lost four million dead, her army was war-weary, the enemy was in occupation of a large part of her European territory. During the debate Lenin had been told that Russia was impotent. He replied:

It is time to throw aside all the bourgeois deceit about the strength of a nation. Strength in the bourgeois understanding is when the masses go blindly into the slaughter, obeying the orders of imperialist governments. The bourgeoisie only considers a State to be strong when it is able, with all the power of the government machine, to drive the masses where the bourgeois rulers want them to go. Our understanding of strength is different. As we understand it, a State is strong in the public spirit of its masses. It is strong when the masses know everything, can judge of everything, and will face anything in full knowledge.

Look back over the years since that day. The Soviet Union withstood three years of counter-revolutionary German and Anglo-Franco-American-Japanese invasion. It repaired, in nine long years of tremendous effort, the damage done between 1914 and 1920. By 1937 it had built the full structure of Socialist society, and was moving further. It withstood the terrible shock of the second world war, swiftly rebuilt once more and has resumed the advance in earnest to Communism. All this was done with the minimum of assistance from the capitalist world, except for the moral support of the workers and peasants; indeed, for most of the time the biggest Powers of the capitalist world were actively hostile.

Can those with eyes to see—unless they believe in miracles—doubt that Lenin was profoundly right? No other explanation is adequate for the victory of the ragged battalions of the early Red Army, amid terrible conditions of hunger, cold and epidemics, over the well equipped foreign invaders and their Russian quislings:

The Thirty-eighth Anniversary of



he Russian Revolution



Wood engravings by the Soviet artist
F. KONSTANTINOV, illustrating "Canterbury
Tales," by GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

for the workers' shock brigades and their Socialist self-denial, in order to maintain alliance with the peasantry, which brought Soviet economy back above the 1913 level by 1927: for the tremendous development of Socialist emulation in the factories which fulfilled the first two Five Year Plans ahead of time, and for the sweeping advance of the great mass of peasantry from village co-operation to collective agriculture and prosperity: for the achievement of victory over Hitler, in a war effort practically single handed, with Allied aid only a thin trickle until the spring of 1943, and unparalleled both in its huge dimensions and the privations which the Soviet peoples had to endure the meanwhile: for the further expansion of Socialist emulation which brought the economy back above the pre-war level by 1949, and has overfulfilled two post-war Five Year Plans by 1955.

All this has remained a mystery for the bourgeoisie just because it sees the strength of a State as ultimately lying in coercion and deceit of the mass of the people—the twin methods by which the rule of a minority of exploiters has always been maintained. To realise this one only need glance through the cynical would-be 'hard-boiled' explanations of the Socialist efforts of the Soviet people in the writings of the bourgeois experts on Communism who have read everything and understood nothing—the innumerable American professorial ignoramuses, and the Intelligence-trained smart-alecs of the B.B.C. and the Sunday papers.

But equally truly does Lenin's observation apply to the foreign policy of the Soviet State, the principles of the diplomacy which it has invariably followed during these 38 years, in the intervals between its wars of self defence. Strong in the last resort because of the public spirit of its own federated Socialist nations, Soviet policy has been guided not by the interests of aggrandisement or 'balance of power' but by the Marxist-Leninist analysis of an imperialist world in which States at different times develop at different rates. The Soviet Union has consequently been able throughout these years to discern among the peoples of the capitalist countries at every particular moment those aspirations and those interests with which it could make common cause. And of these the biggest by far has been the striving for peace.

The age-old hatred and fear of war among the common people have been given a strength and purpose in the age of imperialism which they did not possess in previous ages, because of the existence of the modern working class movement. To that movement the Soviet State—the proletariat organised as the ruling class' (*Com-*

munist Manifesto) over a huge country—could speak as one comrade to another. But it could go further. The great mass of colonial peoples, whose only reason for existence (in the eyes of imperialism) was as a source of super-profits: the middle strata in the capitalist countries, whose very conditions of life depend upon general prosperity and ‘peace and quiet’: sections of the capitalist class itself, in the imperialist countries, and a number of the lesser capitalist States too—the particular sections and States vary, but the phenomenon remains—for whom war brings no chance of profit but only disaster, even extinction: to all these the Soviet Union over the years has been able to address the language of common interest in peace and trade. It was able to line up with ‘the representatives of the bourgeois camp who are inclining towards pacifism, even of the worst kind’ against ‘those representatives of the bourgeois camp who are inclining to a military solution of the problem’ (Lenin, March 27, 1922): it was able in this way (while keeping its own powder dry) to use everything ‘that could, even to a certain extent, hinder the business of war and help in any degree to further the cause of peace’ (Stalin, December 25, 1933).

The Rapallo Treaty with Germany in 1922, when both States were being treated as pariahs: the pacts of non-aggression in the ’twenties with the States who would inevitably have been dragged into the catastrophe of the general anti-Soviet war which the British and French Governments were then planning: the Soviet Union’s fight for disarmament at Geneva (1927-1934); and the pacts of mutual assistance in the ’thirties, when the German imperialist menace began to rise again, and its main foster parents were glad to welcome the U.S.S.R. into the League from which they had originally excluded it—these were some (only some) of the outstanding stages in the new Socialist diplomacy of peace, before the war. But why go so far back? In the last six months alone the whole world has seen Socialist diplomacy winning victory after victory for the cause of reduced international tension, in an unprecedented series of fast overlapping actions (Austria, Yugoslavia, the new Soviet disarmament offer of May 10, the Japanese negotiations, the agreement with Adenauer, and others) which relied for their success not upon smart-alec stunts, but precisely on common interest in peace. That common interest found an immense echo, during these six months, in the famous Bandung Conference of 29 Asiatic and African nations, representing two-thirds of humanity (April): and in a different field at the great World Peace Assembly at Helsinki (June).

The imperialists of Wall Street and Downing Street have been frankly bewildered by this 'peace offensive' against which the 1953-type sneers about 'Soviet new look' and poisonous insinuations about 'deeds not words' were of little avail, just because the peoples they rule (directly or indirectly) know their own interests and responded with enthusiasm. But the imperialists' bewilderment is nothing new. They have always been mystified by the Soviet Union's power of initiative, just as Hitler was mystified in the war years: and for the same reason. They still adhere to the conception of what constitutes the strength of a nation about which Lenin spoke, and can't understand when the peoples nowadays see through it.

How often (particularly from the White House and the Pentagon, but not only from there) have we not heard, in recent years about 'recapturing the initiative'? And to what has this invariably reduced itself, when the pie was opened? Some new and gigantic threat, based on fancied atomic or thermo-nuclear superiority: 'bringing matters to a head', 'massive retaliation', 'talking from strength'—which only had the effect of terrifying their own nations, without frightening the U.S.S.R. Or else some new and painfully obvious sleight-of-hand trick, thought out in the State Department or Foreign Office: an offer of 'exhaustive discussion and settlement of our differences' (made by the U.S.A. in May, 1948), a proposal to establish 'ceilings' for land armies and a 'calendar' of disarmament by stages (made by the Foreign Office in June, 1954)—only to be dropped in affright when the Soviet Union took them at their word (just as happened when the Anglo-French invading coalition in 1919 proposed a peace conference on Prinkipo Island between Soviet Russia and the various 'White' Governments: or when the U.S. President, in a message to the Disarmament Conference in 1932 proposed a one-third cut in all armaments: and the Soviet Government accepted).

Or they fall to swearing that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the effectiveness of which for war on the U.S.S.R. was freely discussed when it was formed, is 'purely defensive in character', and aimed at no one. 'Oh', says the U.S.S.R., 'that's just the kind of organisation we should like to be in: may we join, please?' 'Certainly not!' 'Why?' 'Well, er. . . .' On the other hand, the Warsaw Treaty of Mutual Assistance of May 14, 1955, has been specifically left open for any States to join, 'which may express their readiness to assist, through participation in the present treaty, in combining the efforts of the peaceloving States for the purpose of safeguarding the peace and security of nations'. Why don't Britain,

France and the U.S.A. offer to join it? For the same reason that they don't want the U.S.S.R. to join N.A.T.O.—that the safeguarding of its peace and security, and that of its friends, is the last thing they are concerned with. How can they recapture the initiative, under the watchful eye of hundreds of millions of people who don't want to be blown up by either conventional T.N.T. or unconventional H-bombs, in these circumstances? How can they deceive anyone for long, when faced with this dilemma: that the U.S.S.R. is quite ready to guarantee peace for them, as it always has been, provided it has peace for itself and its friends, whereas they would like to see the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies overthrown by force of arms ('converted from Communism' is the latest fashionable synonym for 'liberated'), but don't want to frighten their peoples prematurely?

But this too is a dilemma they have been faced with ever since the Soviet State came into existence—or, at any rate, since their first attempt to overthrow it by force of arms collapsed in 1920. It recurs this month at Geneva, where the Foreign Ministers of the Four Powers are meeting to put into effect the Directives adopted by the heads of Governments there in July.

The U.S.S.R. wants a European Security Pact—one for all States big and small—or, as a step towards it, an agreement between N.A.T.O. and the Warsaw Treaty Powers to keep the peace. It wants German unity—by the efforts of the Germans themselves—and in such a form as not to threaten European peace for a fourth time in one century (1871, 1914, 1939, . . .). Meanwhile, let the two parts of Germany each stay in their own bloc. It wants genuine and early reduction of armaments and armed forces, involving the banning of the mass destruction weapons at a definite stage in the process: it gave an earnest in August, by cutting its forces by 640,000 men, and in September, by giving up its base in Finland.

The British, American and French Governments want to retain N.A.T.O., come what may: that is their 'rock', they say. Little fiddling experiments in inspection over limited areas, on either side of the dividing line in Germany, perhaps: but no European security without N.A.T.O. Very well then, what about a pact between the two blocs as they stand? Then arises their second 'rock'. They are all for a united Germany: it's the most important question in Europe, there can't be any security without it . . . but it must be in N.A.T.O. (that same N.A.T.O. which is so 'defensively' closed to the U.S.S.R.). For this purpose, the German Democratic Republic must withdraw from the Warsaw Treaty and be handed over, lock

stock and barrel, to Dr. Adenauer and his big business friends. And supposing that condition, however wrapped up in illusory 'safeguards', doesn't appeal to the U.S.S.R.? 'There you are, you see, the Russians don't want unity.' In plain words, N.A.T.O., not German unity, is the real concern of the Western Powers. On disarmament, some very strange things have been happening ever since the U.S.S.R. accepted as a basis the Anglo-French proposals of June, 1954, for disarmament and banning atomic weapons: United States spokesmen have said that they see no chance of disarmament, and Tory Government spokesmen that they intend retaining atom and hydrogen bombs. Eden has specifically rejected any immediate cut in armed forces.

It is pretty clear, in fact, that success for peace at Geneva this month will require strong pressure on the western Governments from below.

Thus once again the thirty-eighth anniversary of the November Revolution finds the Soviet Union taking the initiative in favour of peace *for all*, while the imperialist governments turn this way and that, looking for some device which will *look* like peace while denying it to the Soviet Union. Diplomacy in the hands of 'the proletariat organised as the ruling class' has proved as powerful a weapon, in the interests of the working people of all countries, as State economic planning, say, in home affairs. And it is all the more appropriate, therefore, to recall a passage in the Decree on Peace itself, written by Lenin, which he had moved earlier the same day, November 8, 1917:

The Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia addresses itself particularly to the class-conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of humanity, and the largest States participating in the present war: Britain, France and Germany. The workers of these countries have rendered the greatest services to the cause of progress and Socialism, by the great examples of the Chartist movement in Britain, the series of revolutions of world historical importance carried out by the French proletariat, and finally the heroic struggle against the Anti-Socialist Law in Germany, with the prolonged, stubborn and disciplined work of setting up mass proletarian organisations there, a model for the workers of the whole world. All these examples of proletarian heroism and historic creative ability are a guarantee for us that the workers of the countries mentioned will realise the responsibility for ridding mankind of the horrors of war and its consequences which now devolve upon them, and that these workers by their varied, resolute and unfalteringly energetic activity will help us to carry the cause of peace to a successful conclusion.

The circumstances have changed since November, 1917—but not in some ways. The Soviet Government is no longer provisional—

and has now a long record of Socialist achievement. The war raging today is not one that involves directly the peoples of Europe: but it is no less a disgrace to mankind for being waged in Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus, Algeria and Morocco. Moreover the threat hanging over Europe is of one of general destruction on a still bigger scale than in 1914-18. Above all, what Lenin said so many years ago is just as true today—that the British workers have both a vital interest in supporting the Soviet Union's fight for world peace, and the traditions and power which can help it to success.

NOT CONTENT WITH A HANDFUL OF RICE

IVOR MONTAGU

THE aerial traveller, descending however briefly at Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam, is able to verify, by purchase and experiment, that the Dutch make, and have at their disposal, excellent chocolate. But this is not Dutch chocolate. The cocoa tree does not flourish on the flats of Holland. If you are an Indonesian, however, and dwell where the cocoa tree grows, you cannot eat chocolate. Not unless you are prepared to eat a piece that has travelled all the way to Holland for processing and wrapping and come back again, and to pay the price of the journey, including the profit, to a Dutchman. For the Indonesian has no chocolate factory and, despite his formal independence, the Dutch retain a virtual monopoly of foreign trade. This peculiar, upside-down system is called colonialism. It exists within empires and outside empires; it affects not only backward—delinquent, in certain eyes, when they grumble—orphans under tutelage, but even grown-up states with flags of their own and votes, supposedly tame, at the United Nations. And it is the reason why the 'free world' is coming apart at the seams.

Not so long ago a beautifully carpentered and tailored structure was presented to the self-admiring gaze of its artificers. This monstrosity was dubbed the 'Free World', and it was replete with Western Values, Respect for the Individual, Christian Civilisation—everything that could identify it with the main humanistic current of man's progress, moral and material, and distinguish it from the dank, dark, bee-like, servile and out-of-step minority community of

the steppes. So elevated was its spiritual superiority, so patently aberrant, exceptional and accidental the tiny socialist chunk of the earth, that nothing would appear more justifiable and sooner-or-later certain than a crusade some day to cleanse of this blot the air we breathe (if it would not go quietly). The dreams of this particular crusade are already fly-blown, it has lasted no longer than the illusion of monopoly in nuclear weapons, the paladins of Western Values are having to reconcile themselves to a sitting-down with Communism at least for a period. They will co-exist, and wait a chance for a bash in better days. But what will happen while they wait? The 'Free World' is proving a sickly monster. There is coming a rumble of indigestion from its insides.

Not so long ago, with a megalomania springing from the flimsy figures extorted by their wrist-twisting majority-manufacturing voting-machine, the paladins of the West were talking as if *their* world were congruous with *the* world, of a United Nations which should consist exclusively of themselves and their serfs, or, purged of the awkward squad, should smoothly serve as gramophone, rubber stamp and chorus of applause. Today, so changed is the picture, they are already talking of quitting the United Nations themselves; that body is, it is said, in danger of outliving its usefulness, no good can come of it while the majority fail to show understanding and sympathy for the burdens and responsibilities of the great; moreover, even the voting is beginning to turn up unexpected permutations. And the cause of all this is colonialism.

The ordinary, good-hearted Britisher or Frenchman or Yankee, willing no ill to his neighbours and spoonfed by a press to which Bikini is an imperfect article of clothing, and which represents world affairs as a conflict between what he likes (and only partially enjoys) and whatever he dislikes, projected as the threatened intention for him of the future 'enemy', has no idea of the accumulation of desperate hatred that is gathering throughout the more distant areas of the 'Free World' for the rulers that deny it freedom.

Why should the Javan not have chocolate? Or the Persian cheap oil to light his lamp? Why must the peon of Latin America starve, while the land on which he could grow his food is devoted to a cash crop with a chancy sale? Why must the Brazilian buy dear and sell cheap, both through U.S. trading agencies? What is the 'danger of Communism' but a desire to prevent him from finding cheaper goods to buy and more lucrative markets, or a pretext for overthrowing a government that gives him land? Why should

'Point 4' turn out to be merely aid to mine raw materials required for U.S. war strategy, and never aid to establish and give know-how for industries that might replace imports from the United States? Why should 'self-determination' be a privilege of the English and not of the Cypriot? How is an Algerian a Frenchman, and yet a Frenchman a privileged personality in Algeria? Why should the subjects of the Queen enjoy in Britain the rule of law, and in Kenya be liable to be arrested, tortured and summarily executed by their accusers masquerading as magistrates? If the H-bomb is necessary to the Anglo-Americans, why should it be tried out in the Pacific and not at home? If the French need an army for fear of Russia, how can they spare it for North Africa, to crush Moroccans? Why should the British or American claim to decide himself how he should be defended, but also the right to decide how the Egyptian should be defended? What is the meaning of 'protectorate' applied to the divers Sultans of Morocco or the grazing lands of the Somalis? Of N.A.T.O.'s 'defence of democracy', when invoked to preserve a régime that jails men both in Portugal and Goa for suggesting a consultation of the people? Of 'Christianity', when it justifies the colour iniquities of South Africa? Of 'constitutionalism', when in U.S.A. itself the law against segregation in education, defined by the Supreme Court, is not and cannot be enforced?

The 'white man' need complain no longer of his burden. It is about to be lifted from his shoulders. The comforting old couplet: 'Whatever happens we have got the Maxim gun and they have not' has lost its force since Dien Bien Phu and the Yalu River. The arrogance with which the Afrikaner claims the right of a *Herrenvolk* and calls the Bantu savage, because his own kin—Hitler's Deutsch—murdered millions in gas chambers while Tchaka could only manage thousands with knobkerries; or the Dutch and Australians think the 'backwardness' of West Irian a reason why they should control the resources and people of Papua rather than permit them to be linked with their neighbours and relatives, no longer convinces anyone but the arrogant themselves. Only the 'whites' are still persuaded of the superior virtues, intelligence, deserts of 'whites'. And the 'Free World' and all its claims appear, to all the various shades, hues and tinges of the globe, not only to peasants and workers and leftists but *nationally* to all of them—senators, generals, imams and archbishops—to all except the columnists on each side of the Atlantic deafened by their own headlines and the trumpery collection of psycho-analysed poets and prostitutes gathered into the succession of self-admiration psychological warfare socials paid

for by the Pentagon at fêtes and festivals in five continents, the ultimate of insult and hypocrisy.

The point is not that this is a process that nothing can prevent; it is something that has already happened, that nothing can reverse. The message of the French Revolution—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—was heard as far off as Haiti and Martinique, although for a hundred and more years thereafter the European statesmen and generals did their best to keep it to Europe (where anyway it caused them trouble enough). The message 38 years ago of October—Peace, Bread, Right to National Independence—was addressed ‘To All, To All, To All’ and tapped out over the keys of a telegraph. The message of China, that not only Europeans can break their bonds, that others too can stand up and be great, has thrilled every Asian. And Bandung, the lesson that Asians and Africans can meet and talk about their future without fighting each other to please Mr. Dulles, without Mr. Dulles’ leave, and even in the absence of Mr. Dulles, has re-echoed explosively through South and Central America and given courage to Negro kids in San Francisco to hold their places on the sidewalk. Radio, television, the printing press and rapid transport may have their disadvantages but they make certain that everything is known, quickly, and nothing can be effaced. If the mad Forrestals had their way, and the whole bloc of U.S.S.R., China and the People’s Democracies were extracted from the rest of the terrestrial sphere and replaced by a hole larger than the Pacific deep, still the unfree world could not be kept enchained, colonialism could not be crystallised, emancipation would yet burst all bonds. The principles of the great humanists throughout the ages, given life and confidence and certainty of realisation in 1917 for the first time, are now fertilising the masses throughout the world. There are not two homogeneous fixedly co-existent camps, in the sense in which the two systems, capitalism and socialism, do and will for some time co-exist, and can by the peoples be made to do so without war between them. There is a camp of socialism and peace, firmer, more stable, more blooming day by day; and a camp of imperialism, whose Canutes, ever more isolated even at the United Nations on their shrinking patch of bloodied sand, are drenched with the encroaching spray of the human ocean claiming human right.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

C. C. J. BUTLIN

IT is usual nowadays for American writers of the 'kept' press to accuse the Russians of godlessness, immorality, materialism, fanaticism, aggressiveness, persecution of religion, and so forth. It might be of salutary value for such Americans to recall the identical charges made against their forebears by British journalists and reviewers of the early 19th century. Those long-sustained attacks, they may remember, were heatedly rejected and denounced as ill-conceived and mischievous. One would point out that their own similar charges nowadays against the people of the U.S.S.R. may be even more convincingly refuted.

Such was the invective and distortion of truth in the accusations of the British journalists during the early years of the American Republic that we read:

as the commercial quarrel between America and Great Britain grew fiercer and fiercer, and the second War approached, the belief gained ground that behind these attacks lay a deeply premeditated policy of the British ministry.

(*History of the People of the United States*, Vol. 5, J. B. McMaster)

Then, as now, it was beyond belief that men should sedulously propagate outrageously false fabrications. Indeed, it was thought to be contrary

to every principle of human nature to suppose that men not influenced by the all-powerful motive of self-interest can be so degraded as to prefer downright and palpable falsehood when truth is within their reach.

(*Ibid*)

Some people thought the purpose of the charges was to stop the flow of immigrants, others attributed it to a desire for revenge aroused by the events of the war, still others declared that the calumniators were bent on disgracing the Americans in the eyes of Europe. Sharp retorts from the U.S.A. drew yet more bitter rejoinders from these shores which led to further replies in kind until an international controversy was being waged in a manner far from creditable to either side.

Typical of the British articles at that time was one reportedly written by the poet laureate—Southey—for the *Quarterly Review* during 1814. The author said it might be interesting and amusing to enquire into the character of the people who were being aroused against us by their Government. We should then know how hopeless it was to attempt to form cordial or sincere relations with them.

An Immoral People

The reviewer described the divorce of Church and State in the U.S., and deplored the fanatical extravagances to which men were driven in the absence of a National Church and an established form of worship. His readers were told that an irreligious people must of necessity be an immoral people, many examples from magistrates to tavern-keepers being given. Another critic wrote of the U.S.A. as a country 'where sordid speculators alone succeed, where classic fame is held in derision, where grace and taste are unknown, and the ornaments of style are condemned or forgotten'. Yet another wrote 'of a country where the men are turbulent citizens, abandoned Christians, inconstant husbands, unnatural fathers and treacherous friends'. A further periodical told its readers that 'in the southern parts of the Union the rites of our holy faith are almost never practised'. . . . 'One-third of the people have no church at all. The greater number of States declare it to be unconstitutional to refer to the providence of God in any of their public acts.'

Slavery

The year 1819 was notably prolific in such attacks, the *Edinburgh Review* taking the lead, Sydney Smith's remarks on slavery being especially exasperating to the Americans. 'If nations', he wrote, 'rank according to their wisdom and their virtue, what right has the American, a scourger and murderer of slaves, to compare himself with the least and lowest of European nations?' He continued:

What is freedom when all are not free? And these are the people who taunt the English with their corrupt Parliament, with their buying and selling votes. Let the world judge which is the more liable to censure, we who, in the midst of our rottenness, have torn off the manacles of slaves all over the world, or they, who, with their idle purity and useless perfection, have remained mute and careless while groans echoed and whips cracked round the very walls of their spotless Congress.

The *Quarterly Review* for January/March, 1819, had two articles more savage still. The books reviewed were Fearon's *Narrative of a Journey through the Eastern and Western States*, and Bristed's *Resources of the United States*. The writer drew the attention of his readers to the fact that at New York the streets were narrow, dirty and infested with pigs, the labouring classes ill-clothed, the mercantile population slovenly, careless and dirty. His ideas of liberty, he said, were shocked by the advertisements of Negroes and wenches for sale, and by the stories of beatings and maltreatment of the slaves. He wrote, 'No man valuing genuine freedom or

possessing real sentiments of humanity could for a moment tolerate the idea of passing his days in a country where such brutalising scenes are perpetually before his eyes’.

Anti-Christian

The reviewer then proceeded to outline a most dismal account of life in America. In his opinion, the United States was doomed to overthrow from within. It was in a revolutionary condition, containing within itself the causes of disruption. The writer pointed out that in the Southern and Western States societies existed for the sole purpose of rooting out every vestige of Christianity. In the opinion of the reviewer this fact was not to be wondered at when it was recalled that the Federal Constitution itself made no reference to Providence. It was true that a few State Governments did acknowledge God but the greater number declared it to be unconstitutional to refer to the Almighty. ‘We, the People’ was the general constitutional substitute for Jehovah. Not only had Virginia refused to allow a chaplain to officiate in her State Legislature, but Louisiana had rejected by an immense majority a bill for the better observance of the Sabbath. The writer accused the Americans of being an irreligious, immoral and ignorant people. The scathing attack ended with these words:

In America, the emigrant must expect to find not an economical or cleanly people, not a social or generous people, not a people of enlarged ideas, not a people of liberal opinions, or to whom one could express his thoughts free as air, not a people friendly to the advocate of liberty in Europe, not a people who understand liberty from investigation or from principle, and not a people who comprehend the meaning of the words honour and generosity.

Materialism

The *British Review* of May, 1819, joined in the now fashionable trend of hostile criticism with the following:

It is quite possible that the Americans may become a powerful people, but they lack the elements of greatness. They may overcome a portion of the world, but they will never civilise those whom they conquer. The mass of the North Americans are too proud to learn and too ignorant to teach, and having established by Act of Congress that they are already the most enlightened people of the world, they bid fair to retain their barbarism from mere regard to consistency.

A famous article by Sydney Smith appeared in the first quarter of 1820 in the *Edinburgh Review*. Discussing Adam Seybert’s *Statistical Annals of the United States* he stated:

Such is the land of Jonathan, and thus has it been governed. In his honest endeavours to better his condition and in his manly purpose of

resisting injury and insult we most cordially sympathise. Thus far we are friends and admirers of Jonathan. But he must not grow vain and ambitious, or allow himself to be dazzled by that galaxy of epithets by which his orators and newspaper scribblers endeavour to persuade their supporters that they are the greatest, the most refined, the most enlightened, and the most moral people upon earth. The effect of this is unspeakably ludicrous on this side of the Atlantic.

Impending Collapse of the Régime

Other critics on this side of the Atlantic were not content with detailing the various shortcomings of the American people, but were fond of prophesying the break-up of the State edifice. The *Quarterly Review* for April, 1822, gave extracts from books of travel in America 'to show the bad manners and vulgarity of the Americans, their shiftless ways, their want of refinement and general intelligence . . . there is good reason to believe', said the author, 'that as the population grows more dense in the Western States the existing form of government will be found inadequate, and that the United States will, of necessity, become two, if not more, rival nations'.

Godlessness

The charges brought against America by Gifford in the *Quarterly Review* for July, 1823, were supported by quotations from the then new book by Faux—*Memorable Days in America*. The U.S.A. was 'a dishonest, cunning, cruel, lawless, godless nation'. It 'held slaves, tolerated rowdy juries, met civil officers with violent resistance'. The people kept such peace as they had by lynch laws, could not speak the English language correctly, and in the Constitution did not acknowledge the existence of God. Gifford wrote:

We are very much inclined to ascribe the vicious and heartless conduct of the Americans, with which every page of Mr. Faux's book teems, to the total disregard of religion on the part of the Government.

He said that they must be blamed for 'the most injurious consequences to the morals of the people; for to expect men will cultivate virtue and morality and neglect religion is to know little of human nature. The want of an established national religion has made the bulk of the people either infidels or fanatics'.

Wholesale Depravity

As may be supposed these accusations were vehemently refuted as part of a deeply laid and craftily executed plot to stigmatise the United States on the Continent of Europe. It was said that while here and there some sort of basis might conceivably exist for criti-

cism, at the same time these solitary and exceptional instances had been generalised out of all proportion to the facts. Such writers as Paulding complained that hire travellers, poor contemptible Grub Street hacks, dressed out to resemble gentlemen, had been employed to wander from one American city to another, to search out isolated cases of ignorance, brutality and corruption, and from these instances to draw general conclusions of national vulgarity and depravity. He accused the British Government of glutting the market of Europe with gross calumnies intended to harm the cause of America. Another writer, Dwight, similarly accused the British reviewers, saying that their pens were dipped in gall, while their descriptions of America were mixtures of maliciousness and falsehoods, and their persistence in so writing of the U.S. as indicating a settled and implacable hostility.

Some Americans thought that their country's vindication would come with the passing of the years. One writer, at least, however, was not content to wait. 'An appeal from the judgments of Great Britain respecting the United States' came from the pen of Mr. Robert Walsh. He stated that he had been impelled to write the book in the hope that it might serve to refute the slanders incessantly heaped on his country by British writers. He accused the British politicians of enlisting the help of the great reviews and journals in a common scheme of misrepresentation, so that British people who might otherwise be attracted to America 'might be filled with horror of republican America, and the nations of the world with a distrust of the spirit of her Government'.

A Nation in the Making

Mr. Walsh was not alone in drawing attention to the amazing happenings in America of which British travellers had been intentionally oblivious. Others pointed out, too, that a nation was in the making, great principles of government of infinite importance to the human race were being applied and tested; a vast population was pushing forward, cutting down forests, opening the prairies, founding towns and commonwealths, building roads, clearing rivers, joining great lakes and waterways, creating manufactures, and all the time dealing with the gravest economic and financial problems on a scale and manner hitherto untried. Never before, they argued, had such an interesting spectacle been presented to the beholder. Yet strangely enough the 'travellers' had passed over these phases of life in silence, or, if they were mentioned at all, were alluded to in terms of ridicule.

Reasons for Better Relations

In course of time men on both sides of the Atlantic indicated the many reasons why better relations should prevail. A continuance of the attacks on America, it was pointed out, would 'turn into bitterness the last drop of goodwill towards England', and a severance of ties between the two nations would inevitably be productive of untold evils. 'Where then', asked one reviewer, 'is the justice or the policy of seeking to render a quarrel national when the cause of the quarrel is only with an inconsiderable and declining party of its members? Why labour to excite animosity against a whole people, the majority of whom must be your sincere friends, merely because of some prejudiced or interested persons among them?'

History Repeats Itself

So today in the realm of Soviet-American relations history is strangely repeating itself. In these days, too, the cause of the quarrel is only with . . . 'some prejudiced or interested persons. . . .' The majority of both nations bear no ill-will but earnestly desire the development of trade and friendly relations to their mutual advantage. Thus it may be seen that no people (other than Americans) could be in a better position for appreciating the present feelings of the Russians. The more keenly the former feel the injustice of the allegations aimed at their forebears, so much the better should they be able to sympathise with their late Allies—the heroic and long-suffering Soviet peoples—in the bearing of the insults heaped upon them during most of their recent history. They should recall the fact that similar allegations were levelled at the infant Soviet Republic as those of which the Young American State had been accused a century before.

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UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF FREDERICK ENGELS (IV)

4 Royal Parade, Eastbourne.

August 22, 1894.

MY DEAR LAFARGUE,

We have been here at Eastb for 8 days, Louise, her husband and I. I needed it badly, and the ozonized sea air is already having its effect. Unhappily since yesterday it has been raining more than we need.

Your ch[que]l will arrive at the beginning of next month as soon as I have had my payments.

I am very curious to see how they are going to make use of the new law⁴⁵ against suspects. I am by no means sure that at a given moment they won't apply them against Socialists as well as against anarchists. But if a few individuals do suffer, this law will certainly do for you what the law⁴⁶ of '78 did for the Germans; you will defeat it, and you will emerge from the struggle infinitely stronger than you went into it.

Here the S.D.F. which for some time had seemed to want to adopt a reasonable and tolerable line of conduct, has suddenly fallen back again into the Hyndmanry of yore. At the Congress they held in London two or three weeks ago, the delegate from Liverpool proposed that at the next general election support should be given to the candidates of the Independent Labour Party, provided they had declared themselves openly Socialist. This, against all the rules of English debate, was ruled out by a motion, carried by 42 to 12, that the duty of all Socialists was to join an openly revolutionary socialist organisation, such as the S.D.F. (and as the S.D.F. claims that none such exists outside of itself, this meant: *join the S.D.F.*). As to electoral tactics, this was delegated to a committee which will report on it to the Executive Council.* Thus, the reciprocity which up till now existed in the north (above all Lancashire and Yorkshire) between the two groups is practically rejected by the S.D.F., which proclaims the policy of the Caliph Omar⁴⁷ burning the library at Alexandria: either these books are contrary to the Koran, in which case they are evil; or they say the

*You know, moreover, that nationalisation of the means of production is an essential part of the I.L.P.'s programme.

same things, in which case they are superfluous—burn them! And these people lay claim to the leadership of the Socialist movement in England.

But there is worse. Hyndman declared that it was time that Socialism should clearly break loose from trade-unionism, and that instead of a combined congress of the two, there should be an outright Socialist congress. And as it is realised at the same time that it is still too soon to attempt a direct blow against the congress⁴⁸ of 1896, it was resolved *to convene through the S.D.F. an exclusively Socialist congress, which should meet in London three days before the opening of the general congress in 1896.*

What will the continentals say about it? Will they go to such a congress to go on afterwards to the big congress, to *our* congress, tied hand and foot by resolutions taken two or three days after *en petit comité*? Do they want to provoke a split between the frankly Socialist delegates and those who are not yet but are on the point of becoming so? Do they want to give this slap in the face to the English trade-unionists, who have made so much progress since the New Unionism set them on the road toward Socialism, who at Belfast⁴⁹ in 1893 voted for the nationalisation of the means of production (adopted some weeks ago in the political programme *even* of the recalcitrant London Trades Council) and who at Norwich within a fortnight will decide afresh their attitude to us?

But do you know how the S.D.F., in its annual report and speeches at congress, has depicted the strength of this organisation which lays claim to alter the Zürich resolutions⁵⁰ (for this is a palpable emendation which falsifies the Zürich resolution)? It has—4,500 members. Last year 7,000 names passed through their membership lists, so they had lost 2,500! But what does this mean, says Hyndman? In the 14 years of its existence the S.D.F. has seen *a million men* pass through its ranks!! What an organisation! Out of a million, 995,500 have cleared off, but, 4,500 remained!

Now the key to all these madresses, inconceivable without this key. The Congress of 1896—not a single one of the sects, fractions, groups, etc. that make up what is called here organised labour—can sleep at night for thinking of it. The Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Congress would dearly like to boss the Congress. There are already motions on the agenda of the Trades Union Congress at Norwich (September) to limit admission of the English delegates to the Congress of 1896 solely to those qualified for the Trades Congress; *bona fide* working men, working or having worked

at the trade they represent. And it is claimed they have a fair desire to extend this system to the continentals too, which would cause bursts of laughter loud enough to shake London to its foundations. Well, the S.D.F. which in its turn believes the time has arrived when it will master the Congress and through Congress the English movement, the S.D.F. seems to have taken these reports as a pretext for launching its own little counter-project.

Up to the present this is only a trial balloon. But as soon as the S.D.F. puts out an invitation circular or something similar, the business will take shape, and the continental parties will be called upon to declare themselves.

One question. *Le Socialiste*⁵¹—*lebt er noch, oder aber ist er tot?* (doth it still live, or is it dead?) Since April we don't see it at all. If you have succeeded in killing it, do you reckon that as one of the triumphs of the party in France?

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- ⁴⁵The French laws (of July, 1894) against the Anarchists.
⁴⁶Bismarck's law of 1878 (*Ausnahmegesetz*) against the Socialists making socialist propaganda in Germany illegal.
⁴⁷Reputed to have occurred in the seventh century.
⁴⁸The forthcoming International Socialist Congress (to be held in London in July, 1896).
⁴⁹At the Belfast T.U.C., 1893.
⁵⁰The International Socialist Congress held in Zürich in August, 1893, passed resolutions on the 8-hours day, May Day, political activity, and war.
⁵¹*Le Socialiste*, the daily paper published by the French Socialist Party from 1885 to 1913, was edited by Guesde, Deville, Lafargue and others.

CONTENTS OF PREVIOUS NUMBERS

JULY: *What Next?* John Gollan; *Illegality of Nuclear Weapons*, D. N. Pritt, Q.C.; *Trade Union Problems*, Frank Haxell; *The American Scene*, John Williamson; *The People at Large*, Sancho Panza; *Reminiscences of Lenin*, Elena Stassova; *An Artist in Korea*, Paul Hogarth. BOOK REVIEWS: *Science and Civilisation in China* (Joseph Needham, F.R.S.); *The Fisherman's Son* (Vilis Laciš); *Diary of a Schoolteacher* (F. Vigdorova); *Moment of Choice* (Jack Lindsay); *The Right to Live* (Ralph Millner); *Some Aspects of Indian Population* (V. B. Singh); reviewed by R. Page Arnot, Hugh MacDiarmid, M. D. Clarke, Doris Lessing.

AUGUST: *Geneva and After*, R.P.D.; *The Right to Strike*, A. L. Horner; *Peacemaking: New Phase*, Ivor Montagu; *Labour 'Rethinkers'*, James Klugmann; Unpublished Letters of Frederick Engels. Document of the Month: *For Peace in Malaya*. BOOK REVIEWS: *Peaceful Co-Existence* (Andrew Rothstein); *The Scalpel, The Sword* (S. Gordon and T. Allen); *The British Working Class Reader* (R. K. Webb); *Australian Government and Politics* (J. D. B. Miller); *Roman Britain* (I. A. Richmond); *Greek Myths* (Robert Graves); *M.R.A. Exposed* (S. S. Mariswamy); reviewed by D. N. Pritt, Q.C., Horace Joules, John Saville, Jessie Street, John Morris, R.B.

SEPTEMBER: *Britain's Economy and Peace*, R.P.D.; *Forward from Geneva*, Quæstor; *Means Test in Housing*, Thomas Balmer; *Unpublished Letters of Frederick Engels* (II); *A Prospect of Portland Place*, Judith Todd; *Heroic Story*, William Gallacher. BOOK REVIEWS: *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. III; *The Trial of Jomo Kenyatta* (Montagu Slater); *East Africa Royal Commission Report*; *Economic Development in Rhodesia and Nyasaland* (Thompson and Woodruff); reviewed by Benjamin Farrington, Ralph Millner, Leonard Barnes.

OCTOBER: *Crisis of the Labour Party*, R.P.D.; *Behind the Potted Plants at Southport*, John Horner; *Turning Point for Peace*, Gordon Schaffer; *A New Force for Peace*, Soong Ching Ling; *Trade Bans Boomerang*, Cmdr. E. P. Young, R.N. (Ret'd.); *Education Today*, M. Cooke; *Glossary of American Diplomatic Words*, Sancho Panza; *Unpublished Letters of Frederick Engels* (III). OBITUARY: T. A. Jackson. BOOK REVIEW: *Some Recent Chinese Literature*, William Locke.

Book Reviews

A YEAR OF GREAT CHANGE

J. V. Stalin, *Works, Vol. 12.* (408 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. 5s.)

THIS twelfth volume of Stalin's works covers the period from April, 1929, to June, 1930—a period of great change in the affairs of the world and of stirring advance to socialism in the Soviet Union. It contains some of the classical writings of Stalin with which all students of Marxism will be well familiar, like *A Year of Great Change*, *Dizzy With Success*, *The Right Deviation in the CPSU(B)*, and the *Political Report to the Sixteenth Congress of the CPSU(B)*, but it also contains some material which has previously been difficult to obtain in English translation and some that has never before been published. The background of economic crisis in the capitalist world is painted with vivid and masterly analysis in Stalin's *Report to the Sixteenth Congress of the CPSU(B)* of June 27, 1930. The great economic slump had broken; the capitalist economists and right wing Labour apologists of capitalism had been confounded and, as Stalin writes, things 'turned out exactly as the Bolsheviks said they would two or three years ago'. It is revealing today to think back to the period just before the outbreak of the catastrophic slump of the early '30's:

A halo around the United States as the land of the most full-blooded capitalism. Triumphant hymns of 'prosperity'. Grovelling to the dollar. Panegyrics in honour of the new technology, in honour of capitalist rationalisation. Proclamation of an era of the 'recovery' of capitalism and of the unshakable firmness of capitalist stabilisation (p. 243).

Stalin not only analyses in this report the facts of the developing capitalist slump, but gives a deep analysis of the nature of capitalist slump and also of the general crisis of capitalism within which the economic crisis had developed. Against the background of the great slump within the capitalist world, the triumphant advance to socialism of the U.S.S.R. which is described in these pages stands out with all the more vivid relief. Perhaps 'described' is a wrong word, because the writings and speeches contained in this volume are not just 'descriptions' of what was happening in the Soviet Union, but were themselves essential factors in bringing these happenings about. That is why in reading the volume you are not only studying history, but you cannot but have the feeling that you are participating in the making of history. The sixteenth Congress of the CPSU(B) was the congress of sweeping offensive of socialism along the whole front, of the elimination of the kulaks as a class, of the realisation of the complete collectivisation of agriculture. In this volume are writings that are essential for understanding the whole problem of achieving socialist agriculture—*Concerning Questions of Agrarian Policy in the U.S.S.R., Concerning the Problem of Eliminating the Kulaks as a Class, Dizzy With Success, Reply to Collective-Farm Comrades*. Without the struggle of the Communist Party, led by Stalin, against those on the right who doubted the possibility of collectivisation and those on the left who wanted to advance too fast, or to bye-pass the voluntary principle, the triumph of collectivisation would not have been possible.

Throughout the whole volume there stands out in relief the analysis and practice of the role of the Com-

munist Party. It contains some of Stalin's most powerful writings against the Trotskyites and against the errors of the right (*The Right Deviation in the CPSU(B)*). But above all it shows that it is not enough to have a correct analysis of the political situation. It is possible to have a completely correct analysis of the situation, and yet to fail to make use of it. There can be a gap between 'possibility' and 'actuality'.

The Soviet system provides colossal *possibilities* for the complete victory of socialism. But *possibility* is not *actuality*. To transform possibility into actuality a number of conditions are needed, among which the Party's line and the correct carrying out of this line play by no means the least role. . . . To convert possibility into actuality, we must first of all cast aside the opportunist theory of things going of their own accord (p. 349).

The period of history covered by this volume was one of sweeping socialist advance on all fronts in the U.S.S.R. It was a period when 'possibility' was transformed into 'actuality', and these very writings and speeches were a contribution of the highest order to the fact that this was so.

JAMES KLUGMANN

UNEXPURGATED

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists, by Robert Tressell. (634 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. 30s.)

HAVING read every edition of this book since its inception—the first edition of 1914 being still in my possession—and knowing the tremendous effect that the original copy had upon the whole of the industrial world throughout Great Britain, and particularly the building trades, it did not seem possible to re-invigorate

this work, from the story it told of the struggle of an idea through an industry. As one who has been very closely connected with the industry referred to by Tressell, I have appreciated that the days which have passed since he wrote this famous classic have shown great alterations in the industrial conditions of the workmen so aptly described in the book, and so well extended by the additional chapters which appear to have been expurgated by Miss Muriel Pope in the original edition. The unexpurgated edition gives more colour to the investigating mind of Owen and greater background to the factors that were operating within the industry at that time, and which, to a degree, still operate in relation to men's associations on the job.

I, myself, prior to 1914, lectured on the Socialist principles with which I was endowed through living in a Socialist family. My father and all my relations have been associated with the building trades and I have actually worked under the conditions as described by Tressell. The language used by the men, the back-biting, the cunningness, the betrayal, and the straightforward honest-to-God individuals are absolute demonstrations of the picture that is constantly being portrayed on the sites and the jobs. Whilst the major part of the book is based upon the painting industry, the ambit of all building trades is well demonstrated by the descriptions.

This new edition will be received with great pleasure and sincerity by the industry and by the trade. Although it is 41 years since the first abridged issue saw the light of day, in its new and unexpurgated edition it is bound to be as fresh as on the day that the original copy was published. It is not a history of soldiers, admirals or politicians but of the

common man who lived in poverty and degradation and was treated worse than a slave just a generation ago. Tressell did a great work and, indeed, so have the publishers, Lawrence & Wishart, in giving to us the unabridged version of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. And I want to thank Mr. Ball, whom I know very well, for giving us the opportunity of a complete reading of the mind of the genius of the building industry who wrote this famous book—which I hope every member of the building trade will read, employers and operatives alike, and from which the architectural professions will get some understanding of the background of the life of the building trade operative and the tricks of the employers, if they will only purchase a copy. The 30s. copy is a beautifully bound book and is obviously a library edition. Members of the trade unions, who can get this book with a paper cover, should not miss the opportunity.

R. COPPOCK

THE BEST KIND OF SCHOOL

The Common Secondary School, by Brian Simon. (176 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. 9s. 6d.)

IN England education is divided into three stages—primary to the age of 11, secondary from age 11 to 18, and further education beyond the age of 18 (Universities, Technical Colleges, etc.). Secondary education is tripartite, that is it is divided into three types—modern, technical and grammar. In most districts there is a selection examination designed to aid authorities in allocating pupils. Usually this selection examination comprises an intelligence test and Brian Simon has shown in an earlier book (*Intelligence Testing and the Comprehensive School*, Lawrence &

Wishart) that intelligence testing has completely failed to select these pupils. Here Simon makes clear the evil effects of the selection examination: (a) streaming in the primary school and even in some infants' schools—a label is attached to a child (A, B or C) which sticks to him or her throughout the school career; (b) social segregation into future professional people (Grammar School), future supervisors (Technical School) and hewers of wood and drawers of water (Modern Secondary School); (c) dreadful mistakes in selection at an age when the abilities and capacities of children cannot be known.

From 1942 to 1947 the birth rate rose so much that in some districts it had doubled by 1947. This 'baby bulge' is now entering the secondary schools and 675,000 more secondary places will be needed by 1960. What is the government going to do about it? It has already slashed the building programmes of the local education authorities. What will be the results? In some areas the pass mark has been raised so that children who would have been readily accepted for grammar schools two years ago, are now being rejected. The percentage of the age group for grammar schools is therefore being reduced. Overcrowded classes will be the rule everywhere. In other districts grammar school courses are being started in modern secondary schools.

There is thus a serious crisis in secondary education—and the position will become worse. As a remedy Simon would educate all children in one kind of secondary school—the common secondary or comprehensive school which would provide the courses needed for the growing abilities and developing personalities of the pupils. Accordingly he de-

votes some chapters of his book to expounding the idea of the common Secondary School and to describing the experiments in comprehensive schools which are being tried in England. The principle of the common secondary school is seen to be the focal point of the philosophy of democratic and progressive educationists in England today.

Brian Simon has done a fine job.
S.G.

CLIMBERS AND OTHERS

Privileged Persons, by Douglas Goldring. (280 pp. The Richards Press. 12s. 6d.)

THERE can be very few writers progressive enough to fight the foreign policy of Mr. Neville Chamberlain who remain progressive enough today not merely to see the positive value of the socialist countries but also to make their attitude on these matters public and plain. To do this, especially under modern conditions of publishing, requires a degree of courage. But this, precisely, is the story of that very able writer Douglas Goldring and this alone would make any book of his of interest particularly when, as in this case, the book is partly autobiographical. In fact, however, *Privileged Persons* is of interest for much more than this. It is a fascinating complex of personal reminiscence, of gossip and ever good-hearted anecdotes about real people, and of fiction. Does this sound flippant? The book in fact, while decorated with flippancy, is extremely serious for what emerges from all this is a living study of the decadence of 'privileged persons', of the ruling few and more especially their hangers on which is as enlightening as it is entertaining. Of special interest is the way in which the 'Labour' climber is taken off: the

splendid composite picture of such a man will be keenly appreciated in many a constituency. It is a serious study in historical sociology which it is a delight to read.

STANLEY EVANS

HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE EAST

The Arabs, by Edward Atiyah. (242 pp. Pelican Books. 2s. 6d.)

THE history of the Middle East, past and present, is a sadly neglected subject, all the more because of the important role that the struggle for independence of the peoples of this region is playing in the world today. This book is an attempt to present in a short space the historical background of the Arab-speaking countries in the Middle East and North Africa. After two short and highly condensed chapters on the mediæval Arab empire, it deals with political events in the last 150 years. Mr.

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Atiyah has an extensive knowledge of recent political events in this region of the world. From 1945 to 1949 he was Secretary General of the Arab League-sponsored office of information in London called the Arab Office. He gives a very useful chronology of the various deals by which the Western Powers seized Egypt, North Africa, Lybia, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Palestine in the 19th century and in the first quarter of the present century, followed by political developments in the more recent past with special emphasis on Palestine.

His book suffers, however, from two major deficiencies: a complete disregard of the economic motives of the European colonial powers and a lack of understanding of the national liberation movements. The plundering of the resources of the Middle East for the benefit of the imperialists, for instance, is ignored, while the rule of such ruthless imperialist representatives as Cromer and Kitchener in Egypt is described as 'a just and efficient system of govern-

ment'. As for the national movements, we are once again offered their familiar psychological interpretation as 'emotional nationalism'. According to Mr. Atiyah, the rejection of the notorious Sidky-Bevin agreement of 1946 by the militant Egyptian national liberation movement was caused by 'nationalist excitement' (p. 161), and the Iraqi people's outspoken refusal of the Saleh Jaber-Bevin agreement of 1948 by 'the wounding of Iraqi *amour-propre*' due to the premature publication of the English text of the agreement (p. 152).

After such a marked shortsightedness in looking at past events, it is not surprising that Mr. Atiyah's view of the perspectives for the Middle East countries are confined to agricultural and not industrial development—except in the case of Egypt where the process has in any case begun—and, in the political field to a perpetuation of the conflict with Israel, but, however, with closer links with the West.

NICHOLAS HANNAFORD

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

BOOKS

- The Judgment of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, by John Wexley. Cameron & Kahn, New York. 672 pp. \$6.
 Studies in Ancient Greek Society, Vol. II : The First Philosophers, by George Thomson. Lawrence & Wishart. 368 pp. 27s. 6d.
 The Last Supper and Other Stories, by Howard Fast. Blue Heron Press, New York. 214 pp. \$2.00.
 The English Revolution 1640, by Christopher Hill. Lawrence & Wishart. 64 pp. 3s. 6d.
 In Two Chinas, by K. M. Pannikar. Allen & Unwin. 184 pp. 12s. 6d.
 Open Book, by V. Kaverin. Lawrence & Wishart. 638 pp. 12s. 6d.
 Bees, by I. Khalifman. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow; Central Books, London. 366 pp. 7s. 6d.
 J. Stalin. Works, Vol. 13. Lawrence & Wishart. 428 pp. 5s.
 Floating Stanitsa, by Vitali Zakrutkin; 368 pp.; Verkhovina. Our Land So Dear, by Matvei Tevel'yov; 528 pp. Both Russia Today Book Club. 3s. (to members).

PAMPHLETS

- Sugar : The Story of a Colony, by Billy Strachan. Caribbean Labour Congress. 16 pp. 9d.
 Medical Effects of Radio-activity, by Discombe, Doll, Dobbs, Smith. Medical Association for Prevention of War. 12 pp. 1s.
 U.S. Over Latin America, by Herman Olden and Labor Research Assn., New York. International Publishers. 64 pp. 50c.
 Goa Crisis, by Romesh Thapar. Kutub Publishers, Bombay. 32 pp. 8 annas.
 The Russian Church Today, by Stanley G. Evans. Religion and the People. 16 pp. 6d.
 Men and Motors Today. Communist Party, Midlands District Committee. 16 pp. 3d.

CORRECTION

Page 480, line 23: for 'Liu Pai-yu' read 'Chen Teng-ke.'

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there. Yet we in the Labour movement sometimes don't react so quickly'. I knew this to be true: one delegate had given me a lecture for an unbroken 15 minutes that the summit talks were a mere trick; and we should be organising 'industrial action' *instead* of bothering about international events! My trade unionist friend remarked: 'Well, I wish you'd take back congratulations to Quæstor for his *Forward from Geneva*. Wherever I go I quote that opening sentence of his'. That sentence described the summit talks as *'one of those flashpoints in the affairs of Nature and man when opposite tendencies, slowly accumulating over a long period, suddenly reach the decisive moment. The resultant flash leaves nothing quite what it was before: it represents the starting-point in a new phase of development . . . the opposing forces working for peace and for war still exist, but with the balance of strength between them altered, definitely for the better'*. There will come such a flashpoint in Labour Party affairs.

Well, it was good to meet so many L.M. readers amongst the delegates. I was amused listening to one argument when a delegate said: 'Whether

you agree with L.M. or not, everyone of standing in the Party should read it. R.P.D.'s October Notes put our problems exactly, though I don't agree with all his conclusions'. To which his neighbour defended himself by retorting: 'I read it from cover to cover!'

[Our magazine was on sale everywhere—and sold well.]

This month I have left no room for news of readers overseas. But I know they will forgive it. Some British readers would, I think, be astonished at the interest taken overseas in the 'domestic' affairs of the Labour movement here. An American describes why she reads L.M. 'from cover to cover: I enjoy its forthright expressions of opinion and the sharp analysis of thought and action in your country'. I must leave until next month too, news of readers who have been asking their newsagent to display L.M. well. For free specimen copies and Midget L.M.'s don't forget the form on the back cover; while shop stewards should note that, as I write, there are still a few score left of the Arthur Horner leaflet, *The Right to Strike*. (1d.) September donations totalled:

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